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## Bet You Missed It

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# Bet You Missed It

## Press Clippings — In the News — Carefully Selected by Your Crack Staff of News Sleuths

Column Editor: **Sarah Tusa** (Lamar University Library) <tusa@almark.lamar.edu>

### Wars of the Engines

by **Katina Strauch** (College of Charleston)

This article is about Search Engines and the jockeying that is going on as they try to capture as many users of the Net as possible. A table includes what the service is known for, their population and subscribers and the upside and downside of their service. Did you know, for example, that aol.com is

the "easiest way to get to cyberspace via a phone line," or that Excite "is giving Yahoo! a run for money by... 'personalization'?" See — **Levy, Steven**, "Focus on Technology: Surfers, Step Right Up," *Newsweek* (May 25, 1998), pp. 74-82.

### Going Cerebral

by **Sandra Beehler** (Old Dominion University)

A three-part series (Mar.-May 1998) defines the terms of a new economy: "a world in which people work with their brains instead of their hands." A dictionary rather than an encyclopedia -- most terms are described in a para-

graph or two -- this guide may give you a handle on words that have not yet reached the standard reference works. See — "Encyclopedia of the New Economy," *Wired* v.6. (March 1998), p. 105.

### It Can't Hurt to Try

by **Pamela Rose** (SUNY at Buffalo)

In an effort to engage publishers in a dialog, an international coalition of academic libraries has urged publishers to commit to lower prices for electronic journals

than for print, and to permit electronic-only subscriptions. See — **Kaiser, Jocelyn**, ed. "Libraries Protest E-Journal Prices," *Science*, v.280 (April 10, 1998), p. 171.

### Multi-Format Searching

by **Pamela Rose** (SUNY at Buffalo)

A gateway to a wealth of resources organized by keyword is available at the *British Medical Journal* site, at [www.bmj.com](http://www.bmj.com). For example, a search on "asthma" yields books, jobs in respiratory

medicine, and related articles in other journals. See — **Kaiser, Jocelyn**, ed., Hot Picks section, *Science*, v.280 (April 10, 1998), p.171.

### Bertelsman Impact

by **Bruce Strauch** (The Citadel)

**Thomas McCormack** in his column *The Cheerful Skeptic* pokes fun at an investment banker who believes that the **Bertelsman/Random House** merger will permit the giant to dictate a "no returns" policy even to the big superstore chains. McCormack says the banker has it backwards. The publishers like the returns policy because it produces extra profit for them even with half of the books returned (he cites his prior column Nov. 24, 1977 for the math on that). And logically, if there

are no returns allowed, bookstores will simply cut their initial orders of a new book by 50%. McCormack also refutes the banker's belief that Bertelsman will distribute more product from small publishers. He says a big publisher will only distribute small publishers if it lacks product of its own. The bigger a publisher gets, the more likely it is to shed distributees. See — **McCormack, Thomas**, "Bigger is Confusing" *Publishers Weekly*, (May 4, 1998), p. 25.

### Plant Lovers Take Note

by **Pamela Rose** (SUNY at Buffalo)

**The Missouri Botanical Garden's Web Site** at [www.mobot.org/MOBOT/research/library/kohler/welcome.html](http://www.mobot.org/MOBOT/research/library/kohler/welcome.html) has a display of 270

of German botanist **Hermann A. Kohler's** medicinal plant drawings. See — **Kaiser, Jocelyn**, ed., Net Pics section, *Science*, v.280 (April 10, 1998), p. 171.

### Electronic Quill

by **Melissa Stearns** (Franklin Pierce College)

Pen-maker **A.T. Cross** has developed an electronic clipboard with a battery-powered pen, which allows electronic storage of up to fifty pages of handwritten text. Users download the handwritten documents via an interface with a Windows PC and IBM software converts the document to text. Users correct the text,

add keywords if desired, and can search their indexed documents. This product promises to save time on keying in documents, and can accommodate charts, equations, and forms. See — **Wildstrom, Stephen H.**, "A Clipboard with a Memory," *Business Week*, (April 27, 1998), p.20.

### Look Out, Nielsens!

by **Melissa Stearns** (Franklin Pierce College)

Revenue for Web-based advertising is expected to increase to \$9 billion by 2002, but measurements of "hits" to Web sites is inexact. An increasing number of market research firms are developing varying methods of tracking Web site popularity, but lists of most popular sites remain in dispute. See — **Green**,

**Heather**, "The New Ratings Game," *Business Week*, (April 27, 1998), p.73-78.

### Netscape Bio

by **Melissa Stearns** (Franklin Pierce College)

At 26, **Marc Andreessen**, co-founder of **Netscape**, finds his company threatened by **Bill Gates'** move on Internet browsing. This article covers Andreessen's quick rise from his Midwestern origins, work on **Mosaic** in college, rapid

rise in the California software world, and transformation into pragmatic businessman. See — **Hamm, Steve**, "The Education of Marc Andreessen," *Business Week*, (April 13, 1998), p.84-92.

### Door #1, Monty?

by **Melissa Stearns** (Franklin Pierce College)

As **Windows 98** is being publicized, **Microsoft's** ever-increasing role in the digital world is under renewed scrutiny. The Justice Department's view of Microsoft's domination is explored by three scenarios, involving regulation of

**Microsoft**, the break-up of the organization into separate companies, and maintenance of the status quo. See — **Cortese, Amy & Mike France**, "What to do about Microsoft," *Business Week*, (April 20, 1998), p.112-126.



## Curling Up with Your Computer

by Martha Whittaker (Academic Book Center)

In this article, author **David H. Rothman** describes with wide-eyed wonder a prototype computer developed by students at MIT that mimics a book, right down to real flippable pages and programmable type. Still about five years out, the computer will have software that formats itself into whatever "book" is downloaded into it -- from trigonometry texts to *The Great Gatsby*. The author cites figures for current annual public library expenditures of a lowly \$3 per capita for books. He equates the total annual earnings that authors make from royalties to about a third the amount **Bill Gates'** fortune was enriched last year -- \$5-6 billion. Mr. Rothman laments the

siphoning of money away from books and toward the Internet. He suggests that the solution may lie in a huge national online library, which he calls **TeleRead**, run by (surprise!) librarians. The online library would create economies of scale for libraries and increase readership (thus royalties) for authors. Mr. Rothman's heart is in the right place, and the clearly loves books. He is definitely on the right track in his view that what's holding back the digital library is not just disk space or processing power or bandwidth. It's packaging. See — **Rothman, David**, "Books in Cyberspace," *U.S. News & World Report*, (May 4, 1998), p.60.

## Roundtable Discussions

by Twyla Raciz (Eastern Michigan University)

In the winter of 1996, AAP sponsored a series of meetings between publishers and the technology community. Four groups were formed -- **Trade, Professional and Scholarly, Higher Education and School (El-Hi)** -- to discuss market conditions and the realities of doing business on the Internet. This article contains

the reports of the roundtables held by these groups. Publishers' issues included: free vs. commercial, teaching teachers, brands and selection, protecting copyright, and being first vs. being right. See — **Burns, Christopher**, "Publishers and Technology: Face to Face," *Publishing Research Quarterly*, v.13(3) (Fall 1997), p.3-102.

## Worth Mentioning

by Twyla Raciz (Eastern Michigan University)

Book aficionados will not want to miss this short article on book jackets. The author discusses the designing and importance of book jackets, as well as the fact that little

market research has been done on them. See — **Plagens, Peter**, "Books by Their Covers," *Civilization*, v.5(1) (February/March 1998), p.16-17.

## Big Books for Sub-teens

by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

English Author **Brian Jacques** has become an international bestseller — 1.5 million copies in the U.S. since 1986 — by proving that preteens will read 400 page books if the plots are gripping. His **Redwall** series is a medieval fantasy world of small forest creatures

defending an abbey against evil rats and ferrets. Jacques writes on a manual typewriter and refuses to do more than one book a year. He does not believe in glutting the market with a writer's factory level of output. See — *The Wall Street Journal*, (Thurs. April 9, 1998), p.B1

## Books Cost More Than You Think

by Katina Strauch (Editor, *Against the Grain*)

Back in 1776, books were so valuable that when **John Harvard** donated 400 books, they gave his name to a college. This is a short "charticle," but it is fascinating to look at prices for some of the clas-

sics, adjusted for 1997 inflation. See — **Peter Brimelow**, "Why They Call It Harvard College — Balancing the Books," *Forbes*, March 9, 1998, p.50-51.

## Digital Aging

by Melissa Stearns (Franklin Pierce College)

The rush to computerize has meant that much valuable information is stored only in digital form or is "born digital," and has no record on paper at all. Serious loss of data has been found on a variety of storage media as magnetic tapes and optical disks degrade more rapidly than previously

thought. CD's, in particular, don't show decay until it is too late. Often old software is unreadable by today's equipment, or information is lost in transferring data from old to new systems. See — **Stepanek, Marcia**, "From Digits to Dust," *Business Week*, (April 20, 1998), p.128-130.

## Legal Hair-splitting on Typefaces

by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

Typefaces or fonts are not protected by US Copyright law. They fall in the area of unprotected "useful products" and not "artistic expression." The sale of fonts is big revenue for **Adobe** and they brought suit against a Florida cut-rate typeface entrepreneur. The

judge ruled that while fonts may not be protected, the software that tells a computer how to draw them is. See — "Copy This Typeface? Court Ruling Counsels Caution" *Wall Street Journal*, (July 15, 1998), p. B1.

## Business is 'Clicking'

by Melissa Stearns (Franklin Pierce College)

Business on the Internet is booming, with 1998 sales doubling 1997 figures. Online retailers are benefitting, while those who aren't online are feeling the pinch. Internet sales of books and

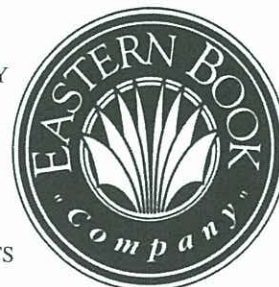
music, \$156 million in 1997, are predicted to rise to \$1.1 billion by the year 2001. See — "The 'Click here' Economy," *Business Week*, no. 3583, (June 22, 1998), p.121-128.

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## Anti-Trust Runs Amuck

by **Bruce Strauch** (The Citadel)

The Justice Department is off on a wild tangent trying to force an alternative product to Microsoft's standard equipment. In fact the real value on the desktop is the software, not the "commoditized bits of plumbing". Netscape has just closed a deal to deliver software to Citibank for web-based banking. It should be grateful that Microsoft has provided

a common platform for the millions of potential bank customers.

What's got Microsoft's competitors really scared is not abusive business practices. Microsoft has \$12 billion in cash and the greatest software research team in world history. See — "Netscape Hype: An Epilogue" *Wall Street Journal*, (May 27, 1998), p.A23.

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## The "iMac" Theater

by **Melissa Stearns** (Franklin Pierce College)

Apple's market share is edging up for the first time in years, and hopes are pinned on the funky teal iMac, due to be released in August. Steve Jobs hopes to attract first-time PC buyers to the computers and persuade Windows users to switch to Macs. iMac could have problems, however. Plans for a

33.6 kps modem and lack of an internal floppy drive may turn some buyers off. Jobs hopes to turn around Apple with software co-development and heavy advertising. See — **Sager, Ira**, "Back to the Future of Apple," *Business Week*, no. 3579, (May 25, 1998) p. 56-60.

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## E-mail Marketing

by **Melissa Stearns** (Franklin Pierce College)

Personalized e-mail is growing as companies discover that sales can be boosted by direct "reminders." Office and computer suppliers, airlines, grocers, and booksellers are keeping customer profiles in databases which make recommendations for purchases, or prompt customers to re-order toner or cereal. E-mail marketers send

reminders to customers who have agreed to the service and have found that response rates exceed normal direct marketing, despite privacy concerns and fears of being labeled a Spam King. See — **Harris, Nicole**, "Spam that you might not delete," *Business Week*, no. 3582, (June 15, 1998), p. 115-118.

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## Corporate E-policy Needed

by **Melissa Stearns** (Franklin Pierce College)

Only a fraction of US companies view e-mail as they do paper documents, train employees in appropriate e-mail use, or create written policies for e-mail. Many companies purge e-mail regularly, while others save everything. Some organizations are discovering that non-management of e-mail is having serious legal consequences. Discrimination suits

and charges of destroying vital e-mail documents are leading some corporations to create better policies, audit e-mail, or use electronic shredding programs, while others alert employees that they are sending or receiving e-mail that violates company policy. See — **Stepanek, Marcia**, "When the Devil is in the E-mails," *Business Week*, no. 3581, (June 8, 1998), p. 72-74.

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## Welcome to my Nanoworld

by **Pamela Rose** (SUNY at Buffalo)

Electron-microscopy negatives, some color enhanced, are available through [www.uq.oz.au/nanoworld/gallery.html](http://www.uq.oz.au/nanoworld/gallery.html). Maintained by **Duncan Waddell** of the Centre for Microscopy and Microanalysis at the University of

Queensland, The Nanoworld is much larger as they capture digitized images directly from microscopes. See — "Small World," *Science*, v. 280 (May 8, 1998), p. 795.

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## Techno-squable

by **Phil Dankert** (Cornell University)

In the debate over how new technologies affect our lives, too often the discussion becomes a war between the two most vocal camps: "on the one side are techno-utopians who see cyberspace as a new idyllic frontier where government is unnecessary," and on the other are neo-Luddites who fear that technology will "unravel the fabric of our values." Now a group of "technorealists" want to end this war by recasting the public debate about technology policy. Recently

they came out with a set of principles that covers a range of issues, including copyright, education ("wiring the schools will not save them"), and control of the airwaves. One of the points they make, and undoubtedly the most controversial, is that government has a legitimate interest in setting rules for computer networks. See — **Young, Jeffrey R.**, "Technorealists' Hope to Enrich Debate over Policy Issues in Cyberspace," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, (April 3, 1998), p. A23 A24.

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## Diminishing Returns?

by **Phil Dankert** (Cornell University)

Is technology's impact in higher education only positive? Definitely not according to attendees at a recent conference held at Harvey Mudd College. Some professors who were at the conference said they feared that technology could ultimately threaten their jobs as well as diminish the quality of university education in America. Perhaps most telling was the comment of one of the students who stated "we don't want 'edutainment,' or

Socrates with a soundtrack. What we want is a flesh-and-blood professor." Several speakers also noted that there is little indication that technology cuts costs; "instead, technology is often a pit into which institutions shovel money." See — **Young, Jeffrey R.**, "Skeptical Academics See Perils in Information Technology," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, (May 8, 1998) p. A29-A30.

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## Digital Ventures

by **Phil Dankert** (Cornell University)

Digital technology has opened up new horizons for librarians. In the "good old days" we made things accessible and then gave them away. This article describes three digital projects and the role played in them by curators of rare books and special collections — that of publishers and revenue producers. It is made quite clear, however, that these publishing ventures

can be quite expensive (even if part of the costs involved are born by commercial companies who may be partners). Furthermore, it is not yet clear that they will bring in substantial amounts of money. See — **Guernsey, Lisa**, "Digital Presses Transform Librarians Into Entrepreneurs," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, (May 22, 1998), p. A27-A28.

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## Patents for Genes

by **Pamela Rose** (SUNY at Buffalo)

The **Foundation for Genetic Medicine** ([geneticmedicine.org](http://geneticmedicine.org)) is posting US DNA patents on a free online database (at 208.201.146.119/). Run jointly with Georgetown University's Kennedy Institute of Ethics, the site, to be updated quarterly, contains over 9,000 non-plant, DNA-based patents issued from 1980 through Decem-



ber 1997. Full text from the US Patent and Trademark Office would cost \$27,000.00. The Foundation hopes to attract users and foster debate over DNA patents and the expensive, exclusive "world of patent law." See — "DNA Patent Free-for-All," *Science*, v. 280 (May 8, 1998), p. 795.